

THE ELUCIDATOR

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UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH
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Office of Surety, Safety and Environment (SSE)

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Newsletter



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“Elucidate: to give clarity through explanation and analysis.”

JALAPEÑO SAFETY ALERT UPDATE

Just when Americans thought tomatoes were the sole source of the recent Salmonella outbreaks, new reports of infected individuals have led researchers to think otherwise. An initial study in New Mexico and Texas in May had linked the consumption of raw tomatoes to the incidences of Salmonella infections. However, a recent nationwide study found that people ill in June were more likely to have consumed raw tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, and fresh cilantro. Since they were often consumed together, it was initially unknown which of the three had caused the illness. Most recently though, jalapeño peppers are being looked at as the main culprit since Salmonella outbreaks have been found when only jalapeño peppers were consumed.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has revised its advice for consumers after tracing peppers eaten by clusters of sick restaurant patrons to several farms in Mexico, including one that also grows tomatoes. That farm supplied Agricola Zaragoza, a small produce distributor and repacker in McAllen, Texas, where investigators found a contaminated pepper sample earlier last week. FDA officials don't know yet whether tomatoes were being harvested on the farm in April, when the outbreak began. The distributor of these peppers is working with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to recall the contaminated peppers in the United States

Consumers can eat domestically grown jalapeño and Serrano peppers without fear of getting infected with Salmonella saintpaul, the strain that has sickened 1,294 people in the United States and Canada. However, the FDA continues to advise consumers to avoid

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raw jalapeño peppers--and the food that contains them--if they have been grown, harvested or packed in Mexico. As an extra precaution, the FDA is warning persons with increased risk of severe infection, such as infants, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems to also refrain from consuming raw Serrano peppers. All raw tomatoes on the market or on their way to market, although not completely free from suspicion, are currently considered safe to eat.

Reminder

For all accidents, no matter how minor,
specific forms documenting the incident must be submitted to your Safety Office.

Military: DA Form 285-AB-4

Civilian: DOL Claims Forms CA-1 or CA-2

All employees requiring medical attention must visit your local Occupation Health Clinic as soon as possible post mishap.

STUDY: KITCHEN CLEANUP LACKING

If you want to eat dinner from a clean surface, you might try your bathroom. A recently released study found that kitchen sinks have more germs than bathroom sinks. The study also found that three-quarters of American kitchen cloths and sponges are heavily contaminated with harmful bacteria, meaning proper clean up can be difficult.

The study was sponsored by the makers of the cleaning product Lysol, but the company did not design the study. Samples were taken by independent environmental scientists in 20 homes with children in each of seven regions, including the U.K., the U.S., Germany, Africa, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and India.

Internationally, 90 percent of kitchen cloths, 46 percent of kitchen sinks, 38 percent of bathroom sinks and 14 percent of children's toys failed the test, meaning they had a total bacteria count of more than 100,000 per square centimeter.

The bacteria included E. coli and salmonella, which were probably carried in by food, small children, or pets. They can cause diarrhea or infections with flu-like symptoms that are especially dangerous to small children, the elderly, and pregnant women. Often families put more effort into cleaning toilets, but not nearly as much time into keeping their kitchens clean. There is a basic lack of understanding that kitchen sinks can be contaminated with fecal organisms. Some research findings suggest that cleaning with a dirty sponge can spread more germs than not wiping surfaces at all. One study found that bachelors had the cleanest kitchens because they just threw their dishes into the kitchen sink and didn't spread bacteria by wiping the counter tops with dirty sponges.

But keeping clean is not impossible. If you're worried about bacteria in your kitchen, here are a few tips for cleaning it up:

MICROWAVE: A one-minute high-powered blast can keep your sponges and dishcloths sterile. However,

this technique doesn't work for natural sponges.



WASH YOUR HANDS:

There is little to no evidence to show that it is better to wash your hands with hot water rather than cold water. It might feel better to use warm

water, but as long as there is soap involved, washing your hands in cold water should work just as well.



DON'T RINSE CHICKEN:

Chicken is so notorious for spreading salmonella and other harmful bacteria that the USDA is no longer recommending that you rinse it in the kitchen sink. The water

splashes and it spreads bacteria to other parts of the kitchen that won't be as easy to get to. Eighty percent of chicken carry potentially harmful bacteria, and any surface that comes in contact with it should be washed thoroughly.



TOSS IT: Food and juice spills should be wiped up with a paper towel and dumped. That avoids contact with a bacteria-infected sponge or dishcloth where the bacteria will feed on

the food and drink supplied. If you are concerned about contributing to paper waste, consider using environmentally friendly paper towels that are made from 100% recycled paper.

DON'T DROWN IN CHEMICALS: Try practicing targeted hygiene, where discretion is used when spraying chemicals, even if they are FDA-approved and non-toxic. For example, there's not much point in spraying your windows with anti-bacteria spray.

SCOOT TO WORK

50mph (80kph) in 6.8 seconds, with a max speed of 60mph (100kph) and a range of about 68 miles (110 km) at an average of 25mph (40kph). The 2008 MSRP for a Vectrix Electric Scooter is \$9,395.

If you're a first-time biker, please consider taking a MSF Rider Safety Course. It's easy and fun, and chances are there is one near you. Also, please consider proper safety gear as an essential part of riding. Ar-

mored jackets and pants, boots, gloves, and a full-face helmet are essential for surviving even a low-speed crash. Any scooter dealer worth his salt will offer good gear to go along with your scooter. And please stay away from open-face helmets—they offer much less protection than full-face helmets. Nobody wants to rub his face on asphalt at 50 MPH.



The Vectrix Electric Scooter

THE SSE ELUCIDATOR'S MONTHLY CARELESS CALAMITIES

Welcome to the latest edition of *Careless Calamities*. This month you get to vicariously experience mishaps involving both bullet fire, water, and hammers.

1. Inadvertent adrenalin rush of the month goes to a pair of soldiers who were recently driving a rented SUV at a test and training range one night. An F-16 was on a training mission at the time, and the pilot was getting some practice shooting at ground targets. The SUV was in the target area. Apparently the pilot was a good shot. An Air Force spokeswoman said the soldiers were not hit but suffered minor injuries "while exiting the vehicle in rough terrain." Personally, any minor injuries I suffered while abandoning ship at top speed while getting shot at with really big bullets would be a welcome alternative. Lesson learned: Stay out of areas where bullets might fly past your head.

2. You know what is a blast? Getting towed in an inner tube behind a motorboat. You get to bounce around, splash like crazy, get all wet, whoop and holler. You know what stinks? When the guy at the steering wheel (in a recent case involving a corporal, misjudges the distance to a pier, turns too tightly

and too fast, swings you w-a-a-a-y out to the side and slams you into a piling. The Marine was wearing a life preserver, which was good, but he still lost a day of work and spent a month on light duty. Lesson learned: Know your driver. Make sure he has been at the end of the line in a game of "crack the whip" before.

3. At a Marine Corps maintenance center in Georgia, a civilian equipment mechanic was trying to break loose a piece of track. He was wielding a sledge hammer. A simple, no-nonsense device that works great as long as you hit what you're aiming at. In this case, the mechanic succeeded. However, a piece of the track link broke off and skewered him in his left thigh. Sometimes, you think you know what you want, and you are doing your best to produce that result, and then you get exactly what you thought you wanted, but you find out that it wasn't quite what you wanted, after all.

That's all for this month! Until we meet again, please take a moment to consider some possible consequences, even if you aren't swinging a sledge hammer at the time.

SCOOT TO WORK

Those who want to ease the pain at the pump are turning to two-wheeled vehicles instead of four. The first scooter craze happened in Italy after World War II. Now scooters are becoming popular in the U.S. as an economical way to travel. Because of high oil prices, 30 percent of Americans are now saying they would consider riding a scooter, and sales of scooters are up by 200 percent. For various reasons, biking to work is not an option for all people. However, a great alternative way to reduce your gas consumption and cut down on green house gases is to commute to work with a scooter. If you're thinking about buying a scooter, here are some things to consider:

1. They get amazing gas mileage.

For example, a champion performer, the Honda Metropolitan 50, gets 100+mpg. Small scooters (50-150cc) naturally get better mile-



Honda Metropolitan: 100+ MPG

age than bigger ones (200-700cc). Even the largest scooters, like the Honda Silverwing, get 52mpg.

2. They're cheap. You can pick up a Kymco Agility 50 for \$1,599 new. If you buy used, you can save even more. Most used scooters have low mileage because they were just used casually.

3. Sales are up. Scooter sales are up nearly 24 percent for the first quarter of 2008 (compared to 2007), so you won't be alone when scooting.

4. They're free to park (or nearly free). More cities are accommodating the increase in motorcycles and scooters on the road. Many parking lots offer free parking for bikes and many meter maids turn a blind eye to illegally parked scooters. You can usually park very close to your destination. Scooters also fit nicely between cars—just leave the cars enough room to get out.

5. They're cheap to insure and maintain. For example, one driver paying \$500/year for a basic liability

on a motorcycle would pay only \$90/year for the same coverage on a scooter.

6) Some actually look cool.

The Italian scooters—Vespa and Piaggio—have some nice-looking models. Fans of the Quadrophenia will especially dig Vespa's "S" model, with its Euro square headlight and chrome trim. If you are searching for a more modern look, the Piaggio MP3



Piaggio MP3 500

has a nice, aggressive stance complete with crash bars.

7. You will get the bonus of weather protection.

When it rains, you stay unusually dry on a scooter and you aren't affected by most puddles because of the leg shields. There are even accessories like the "scooter skirt" that increase protection.

There are some disadvantages to consider:

8. Small wheels aren't stable. Smaller scooters especially suffer from small wheel diameters and widths. Many scooters have 10-inch wheels (compared to 17-21 inch motorcycle wheels), which are fine at low speeds, but above 40mph, things can get unwieldy. Even the larger-diameter scooter wheels have narrow tires.

9. Might not the best choice for freeway commuting.

Some scooters might claim high top speeds, but that doesn't make them stable at those speeds. The geometry and weight of scooters make them unstable for high-speed driving; most scooters under 150cc aren't even legal for freeway driving.

Taking it a step further: consider an electric or hybrid scooters. An electric scooter that leaves a lot of other forms of transportation in the dust is the Vectrix Electric Scooter. Powered by a 125-volt Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH) battery pack that you can recharge in a couple of hours, it can accelerate from zero to

10 STEPS TO BECOMING A LOCAVORE

Locavores are people who pay attention to where their food comes from and commit to eating local food as much as possible. The great thing about eating local is that it's not an all-or-nothing venture. Any small step you take helps the environment, protects your family's health, and supports small farmers in your area. The first step to being a locavore is to determine what local means for you. This is an individual decision that should feel comfortable for you and your family. Many locavores start by trying to eat within a 100-mile radius from their homes and then adjust where necessary, sometimes encompassing an area as large as an entire state or region. Visit <http://100milediet.org/map/> to draw a 100-mile circle around your home to help with your food choices.

1. Visit a farmers' market. Farmers' markets keep small farms in business through direct sales. Rather than going through a middleman, the farmer takes home nearly all of the money that you hand him for your produce. Need to find a market in your area? Try the USDA's farmers' market guide at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/FarmersMarkets/>.

2. Lobby your supermarket. Ask your supermarket manager where your meat, produce, and dairy is coming from. Remember that market managers are trained to realize that for each person actually asking the question, several others want to know the same answer. Your show of interest is crucial to help the supermarket change its purchasing practices.

3. Choose 5 foods in your house that you can buy locally. Rather than trying to source everything locally all at once, try swapping out just 5 local foods. Try apples, root vegetables, lettuce, herbs and greens. In most areas, it's also possible to find meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and cheese—all grown, harvested and produced close to your home.

4. Find a local CSA and sign-up! Through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program you invest in a local farm in exchange for a weekly box of assorted



vegetables and other farm products. Most CSA programs provide a discount if you pre-pay for your share on a quarterly or yearly basis. CSA programs take the work out of buying local food.

5. Preserve a local food for the winter. Try your hand at making applesauce, apple butter and quince paste. To learn about safe preserving techniques, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>.

6. Find out what restaurants in your area support local farmers. You can do this by asking the restaurants about their ingredients directly, or by asking your favorite farmers what restaurant accounts they have. Frequent businesses that support your farmers.

7. Host a local Thanksgiving. Participate in the 100-mile Thanksgiving project by making a dish or an entire meal from local foods. For more info visit <http://100milediet.org/thanksgiving>.

8. Buy from local vendors. Can't find locally grown? How about locally produced? Many areas have locally produced jams, jellies and breads as well as locally roasted coffee and locally created confections. While these businesses may not always use strictly local ingredients in their products, by purchasing them you are supporting the local economy.

9. Ask about origins. Not locally grown? Then where is it from? Call the producer of your favorite foods to see where the ingredients are from. You'll be amazed how many large processed food companies are unable to tell you where your food came from. By continuing to ask the questions we are sending the message that we want to know the origin of ingredients.

10) Visit a farm. Find a farm in your area by visiting <http://www.localharvest.org/> and call to make an appointment to see the farm. When you visit, ask the farmers what challenges they have had and why they choose to grow what they are growing. Be sure to take the kids along on this journey!

PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

Preventing back injuries is a major challenge to employers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, with back injuries accounting for one out of every five workplace injuries and illnesses. One fourth of all compensation indemnity claims are a result of back injuries. This problem produces pain and discomfort to employees, and can have a dramatic change in their productivity and lifestyles.

A BLS survey shows that four out of five of these injuries were to the lower back, and that three out of four occurred while lifting. This survey shows the importance of reducing back injuries caused by lifting. Although no approach has completely eliminated injuries, a substantial portion could be prevented by incorporating an effective control program, along with an ergonomic analysis and design of work tasks.

OSHA has evaluated ways to help prevent lifting injuries. They specify two types of "controls": engineering controls and administrative controls. *Engineering controls* are used to redesign the workstation to minimize lifting hazards. *Administrative controls* include carefully selecting and training workers so that they can perform their jobs safely.

Suggested administrative controls include:

- ♦ Strength testing of existing workers, which one study showed can prevent up to one-third of all work-related injuries by discouraging the assignment of workers to jobs that exceed their strength capacities.
- ♦ Physical conditioning or stretching programs to reduce the risk of muscle strain.
- ♦ Training employees to utilize lifting techniques that place minimum stress on the lower back.

HOW TO LIFT SAFELY – Before lifting, take a moment to think about what you're about to do. Examine the object for sharp corners, slippery spots or other potential hazards. Know your limit and don't try to exceed it. Ask for help if needed, or if possible, divide the load to make it lighter. Know where you are going to set the item down and make sure your path is free of obstructions. Then follow these steps :



1. Stand close to the load with your feet spread apart about shoulder width, with one foot slightly in front of the other for balance.

2. Squat down bending at the knees (not your waist). Tuck your chin while keeping your back as vertical as possible.

3. Get a firm grasp of the object before beginning the lift.

4. Begin slowly lifting with your LEGS by straightening them. Never twist your body during this step.

5. Once the lift is complete, keep the object as close to the body as possible. As the load's center of gravity moves away from the body, there is a dramatic increase in stress to the lumbar region of the back. If you must turn while carrying the load, turn using your feet—not your torso.

To place the object below the level of your waist, follow the same procedures in reverse order.

Using proper lifting techniques can help prevent downtime due to avoidable back injuries. With a little practice, precautionary methods such as these can become good daily habits that could help prevent back injuries—both on and off the job. Remember, no approach will completely eliminate back injuries. However, a substantial portion can be prevented by incorporating effective administrative controls and engineering controls. To evaluate a worker's lifting habits, consider the following variables: frequency of lifting, duration of such activities, and type of lifting, as well as the worker's state of health, body size, age and general physical fitness.

ELIMINATE YOUR JUNK MAIL

Facts About Junk Mail – The average person gets only 1.5 personal letters each week, compared to 10.8 pieces of junk mail. Each person will receive almost 560 pieces of junk mail this year. That's 4.5 million tons of junk mail produced each year! 44% of all junk mail is thrown in the trash, unopened and unread. Approximately 40% of the solid mass that makes up our landfills is paper and paperboard waste (by the year 2010, it is predicted to make up about 48%). 100 million trees are ground up each year to produce junk mail. Lists of names and addresses used in bulk mailings are in mass data-collection networks, compiled from phone books, warranty cards, and charity donations (to name a few). Your name is typically worth 3 to 20 cents each time it is sold.

How to Trash Your Junk Mail – To help reduce junk mail, cut down waste, and save some trees to boot, follow these 7 easy steps:

1. The Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act took effect September 30, 1997. Under one provision of the new law, consumers can call just one of the following three major national credit bureaus (they share the lists) to have their names removed from mailing lists used for unsolicited credit and insurance offers. Virtually all companies offering pre-approved credit cards use lists from these three major credit bureaus:

- ♦ Equifax, PO Box 740123, Atlanta, GA 30374-0123 – Phone: (888) 567-8688
- ♦ Experian (formerly TRW), Target Marketing Services Division, 12606 Greenville Ave, Dallas, TX 75243 – Phone: (800) 353-0809
- ♦ TransUnion, 555 West Adams Street, Chicago, IL 60661 – Phone: (800) 680-7293

2. The Direct Marketing Association represents many mail order sales companies, and estimates that listing your name with their mail preference service will stop 75% of all national mailings coming to your home. Call or write and ask to be added to their suppression list: D.M.A. Preference Service, Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 – Phone: (212) 768-7277.

3. Companies that do not participate in the D.M.A. program must be contacted directly. In addition, if you only want some of your junk mail stopped, contacting individual companies is the way to go. You can write to firms that send you unsolicited material and tell them firmly to stop. Be sure to use the enclosed Business Reply envelopes when replying through the mail, and address them to Customer Service. You can also call the firms' toll free numbers and ask to speak with customer service.

4. Buyers beware...you are covered under a manufacturer's warranty whether a card is returned or not. These cards are primarily used to gather names for mailing lists. Write National Demographics & Lifestyles, a firm that collects this information, to have your name removed: NDL List Order Services, 1621 18th Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202

5. To remove your name from major nationwide sweepstakes mailers, contact:

- ♦ Publishers Clearinghouse, 101 Channel Drive, Port Washington, NY 11050 – Phone: (800) 645-9242
- ♦ Readers Digest, Readers Digest Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570 – Phone: (800) 234-9000
- ♦ American Family Publishers, PO Box 62000, Tampa, FL 33662 – Phone: (800) 237-2400

6. For more information, check out these web sites: National Waste Prevention Coalition – www.metrokc.gov/nwpc; Consumer Research Institute – www.stopjunk.com/environment.html; Ecofuture – www.ecofuture.org/ecofuture/jnkmail.html.

7. To find out more information about phone book data mailing lists, ads and coupons addressed "to the resident", and other junk mail organizations and campaigns, contact: Native Forest Network, PO Box Missoula, MT, 59807, Phone: 406-542-73438251, Fax 406-542-7347.

As you begin to take action to reduce your personal junk mail, remember to be both persistent and patient. You should notice a decrease in your junk mail within a month, but the removal of your name from these extensive lists takes awhile.